2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

It seems probable that the property groups of retainer Nayars divided somewhat earlier in their development during the nineteenth century than during the period of native rule. The reason for this is that during British rule Nayar men, having no other compulsory work, considered themselves old enough to become kāranavans by the age of thirty to forty, provided their appropriate elders were dead. In the traditional period, presumably, a man would be in arms until at least the age of fifty and would be unlikely to press for kāranavanship before that age.

Further differences in the patterns of division of property groups must have arisen from the marked increase in population during British rule. This is not documented until after the 1870's but from genealogies it appears to have begun between four and five generations ago. The increase would mean that more women, and a higher proportion of women, would have had enough living children to become the founders of discrete lineage segments during their lives or shortly after their deaths. Thus property groups in the nineteenth century would divide not only at an earlier point in their structural development but also more frequently than was the case during native rule.

The absolute size of traditional property groups was limited by the amount of land available to each. It can be roughly gauged by the size of the houses they left behind. It seems unlikely that a traditional retainer property group would contain more than twenty-five to thirty people, or fewer than six.

Interpersonal Kinship Relationships

I describe the relationships between kinsfolk as these have existed in the recent past in the most "traditional" households, making reference to earlier periods when this is possible.

WOMAN-SON

The relationship of mother and son was the strongest in the system in the sense of mutual obligation and the expectation of mutual love. A man should place the needs of his mother above those of all other kin. A woman should show equal concern for her children of both sexes, but it was expected that her primary attachment would be to her sons.

A woman's obligations to both daughters and sons in their early childhood included breast feeding to the age of two or three, care, especially in sickness, and instruction in cleanliness and in the manners and morals of their caste.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Thandans

earlier, but I give the information here as it was recorded by me at the time from the informant's statement.) 291 864

In spite of a child being fed at the breast very late, the habit of sucking a jump or a finger existed in Kerala as much as it does with us. Nani said that mothers did try to stop it, telling the child that it is bad, and threatening punishment should it persist. There were no substitutes given, such as rubber teats, and the habit was the natural derivative of breast suckling. When the children had teeth, they used them freely when feeding, and also pulled and scratched the breast with their hands. Boys and girls behaved similarly in this respect and she could notice no difference due to sex between them. 853

Diapers made of cotton cloth in which the child was wrapped were used for the first year and a half. Then the baby was taught the rudiments of sanitation and shown where and how to go. The mother was almost exclusively in charge of teaching the child this, but sometimes in exceptional circumstances (when she was in the polluting period of her menses), the father, the one most fond of the children, would take the task upon himself. Should the baby forget itself or disobey what it had been told, it would be beaten with a twig over the buttocks or threatened that it would be carried away by a madman or a cat or a dog. 863 [854] [861]

Children slept together on the same mat on the floor of the house until the age of twelve. Aggression between them was quite marked at an early age, and Nani had already told me how the infants with teeth treated her when feeding. A new-born child caused the development of much jealousy among the elder children and they bit and scratched at this time even more than usual. Sridaran was the worst in this way of the four children she had had, and he was still the most aggressive of them all. He often threatened to drive his mother out onto the road and back to the house from whence she came, and accompanied his threats with kicks. He never dared, however, to say such things to his fathers, and showed a marked preference for Narayana, corresponding in this to what Panju had told me about presumed physiological paternity. He seemed to resent any interference from his elder father, especially when the latter insisted on his going to school. He had been known to refuse point blank to go there. 865 [513]

Raghavan, although very young and quieter now, was pretty bad, too, in the way that he fought, bit and scratched his mother. He was late in walking and talking and had really only just learned to do these things. Madhavan spoke very early, earlier than all of them; at the age of five months, he could already make himself understood with words. Nani [856]